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ABSTRACT

This paper reviews patterns in the literature on minority teachers and teacher preparation. The study involved an extensive literature search using the following database selections: Books in Print A-Z; ERIC Database 1966-2000; Education Abstracts FTX 6/83-12/99; PsycINFO 1984-2000/02; Sociological Abstracts 1963-1999/12; and Social Sciences Abst FTX 2/83-12/99. The search generated 1,111 records on minority teachers, 12,768 on multicultural education, and 5,604 on teacher preparation. Several patterns emerged: minority teacher recruitment and retention; role model hypothesis; assessment issues; description of special/alternative programs for particular populations (e.g., paraprofessionals and high school students); and teacher perception of programs and teaching. The paper also analyzes 90 records that appeared when the descriptors multicultural education and minority teachers were combined. It concludes by discussing the trends and examining implications for multiculturalists. The paper notes the causal relationship between the increase of children of color and the shortage of teachers of color. It also notes the lack of scholarship in the field of multicultural education that addresses the needs and preparation of teachers of color. (Contains 79 references.) (SM)

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# Trends in the Scholarship on Teachers of Color for Diverse Populations: Implications for Multicultural Education

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Scholarship on the preparation of teachers for diverse populations speaks to the need of minimizing societal racist tendencies, cultural limitations, and ethnocentric experiential backgrounds of White teachers (e.g., Abell, 1999; Artiles & McClafferty, 1998; Cochran-Smith, 1995; Haberman, 1996; Tatum,1992) and the need to increase the representation of teachers from groups of color (e.g., Boyer & Baptiste, 1996; Dillard, 1994; Gonzalez, 1997; Lenth, 1988 Villegas & Clewell, 1998; Wise & Perez-Torrez, 1994). While literature on White teachers is more extensive, the scholarship on teachers of color is increasing.

An extensive search of the literature using the following database selections: Books in Print A-Z, ERIC Database 1966-2000, Education Abstracts FTX 6/83-12/99, PsycINFO 1984-2000/02, Sociological Abstracts 1963-1999/12 and Social Sciences Abst FTX 2/83-12/99, generated 1,111 records on "minority" teachers, 12,768 on multicultural education, and 5,604 on teacher preparation. When descriptors were combined the following number of records surfaced in the following categories: Multicultural Education/Teachers of color, 90 out of 12,768 and Teacher Preparation/Teachers of Color, 188 out of 5,604. Most often the scholarship was published in ERIC documents, monographs, collected works originating from speeches,

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descriptive state reports, guides-non-classroom, opinion/paper presentations, program information/analysis, surveys, and taskforce reports. There are some dissertations, journal articles, and special theme issues on topics such as "minority" or "urban education."

This paper reviews patterns from the literature on "minority teachers" and teacher preparation. The following patterns emerged: recruitment and retention, role model hypothesis, assessment issues, description of special/alternative programs for particular populations, and perception of programs and teaching. A separate analysis is made of the 90 records that appeared when the descriptors multicultural education and "minority" teachers were combined. The paper concludes with a discussion of the trends and the implications for multiculturalists.

## Trends in the Literature

### Recruitment and Retention

Articles and papers in this category often begin with local, state, and national demographic statistics documenting the increase of children of color in public schools and linking this data to the undeniable shortage of "minority" teachers. Informational reports outline policy, suggest procedural and structural programmatic changes, and advocate for diversity in the teaching force. Examples of these publications include state studies (e.g., California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 1994; Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning, 1999), large scale surveys (e.g., American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 1994), and national symposiums with representation from educational, community, and governmental groups (e.g., American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 1990; Middleton, 1989). While most publications address multiple educational issues, a discussion on recruitment of "minorities" to teach "minority" students is generally included. This scholarship addresses "minority" recruitment through state and national studies, proposals, legislation, and evaluation of alternative programs.

Work focusing on action agendas promote specific strategies and "best practices" for recruitment (e.g., Case, 1988; Nicklos & Brown, 1989; Thomas, 1995). Papers describe

partnerships with school districts and community colleges, financial aid packages, test taking training, academic and social support, application process, ways to accommodate students needs in course scheduling, and the need to increase "minority" college faculty to serve as role models.

Other scholars explain why the recruitment of "minority" teachers is problematic (Haberman, 1988; Rendon, 1994). They maintain that students of color attend segregated-underfunded schools and exhibit low achievement and high drop-out rates. Obviously, these factors limit college attendance. Some studies report why students of color are not attracted to teaching (Michael-Bandele, 1993; Gordon, 1997; Harris, 1997). For example, students of color, aware of the low salaries, lack of respect, and perceived intolerable working conditions, choose other careers.

Role Model

The role-model hypothesis — "minority" teachers serving as role models for "minority" children — while prevalent is unsubstantiated. Although scholars do not define this construct, it is assigned to teachers of color and used to justify their presence in schools (e.g., Hodgkinson, 1987; Leonard, 1988; Mattai, 1989; Stewart, 1989). It is assumed that teachers and students who share the same-race or same-ethnic group's physical racialized markers, embody similar attitudes, needs, values which positions them as models of success or as individuals meriting emulation. Shaw (1996) points out that the role model designation by virtue of race alone is unrealistic and condescending. According to Shaw (1995), the selection of a few, to serve as "exemplars of success for youth of a deficient culture" rarely serves as an inducement for teaching (p. 348). Additionally, Irvine (1989) found that Black youngsters tend to identify family members, religious leaders, and celebrity figures, rather than teachers as role models.

Assessment Issues

The testing movement began in the Southern states in 1977 with three states, spread to 44 in 1987, and, today, 41 states require some form of testing for licensure (Tests and Teaching Quality, 2000). Researchers and multiculturalists in the 1980's documented the high failure rate

of "minority" teachers, questioned the predictive validity of tests, and addressed the issue of equity in this reform approach designed to improve teacher quality (Gallegos, 1984; Garcia, 1986; Smith, 1984). They argued that while tests did not predict competence in the classroom, they did eliminate disproportionate numbers of African American and Latino American teachers from classrooms. Dilworth (1987-88) alleged that testing had a greater negative impact on the number of African American teachers than all other deterrents combined. Pressman and Gartner (1986) called the U.S. standardized testing of teachers the "New Racism" in education, while Bruno and Marcoulides (1985) predicted it would result in lack of teachers of color in inner-city schools.

Since policy makers at the state and federal level promoted and controlled initiatives to improve the quality of teachers through testing, the literature in the 1990's reflects this powerful endorsement. Hundreds of records on testing, establish a rationale, compare versions and subsets, correlate test and teacher preparation course content, investigate predictive validity, and promote accountability through rigorous licensing requirements (e.g., Dybdahl, Shaw, & Edwards, 1997; Shanker, 1996; Shapiro, 1994; Tanner, 1995). In fact, recently, the U.S. Department of Education asked the National Research Council (NRC) to study the testing issue. In their 2000 interim report NCR acknowledged disparities in passing scores between Whites and teachers of color; however, they concluded that licensure tests provide useful information (Tests and Teaching Quality, 2000).

In what appears to be a resignation to the powerful testing movement as an idee fixe, few scholars continue to discuss the affects of testing on teachers of color. Those who do, continue to question the purpose and validity of tests, point out test bias that keep otherwise qualified teachers of color out of the classroom, and describe legal challenges and disappointing court decisions (e.g., D'Costa & Ayres, 1993; Hill, 1996; Hood & Parker, 1991; Valencia & Aburto, 1992).

Special/Alternative Programs

Some studies describe alternative programs designed to attract particular populations with a majority of individuals from groups of color, such as paraprofessionals (Dandy, 1998; Summerhill, Matranga, Peltier,& Hill, 1998; Villegas & Clewell, 1998), emergency credential teachers (Robbins & Campbell, 1996), community college to university transfer students (Anglin, 1989), and high school students (Grohe, 1989). Preparing teachers of color skilled in particular disciplines — mathematics, science, and world languages (Anderson, 1992; Loving & Marshall, 1997; National Science Foundation, 1995), for special programs - bilingual education, special education, and gifted education (Ford, Grantham, & Harris, 1997; Savelsbergh, 1994), and for selective settings — rural and urban (Littleton, 1998; Mattai, 1989; Stewart, 1989; Stoddart, 1991) are also included in this area of research.

Teacher Perception

This category, with the least number of publications, rarely includes perception of Asian American teachers group. Most of the research seeks participant voice on the issues delineated above such as, recruitment (Gonzalez, 1997; Yopp, 1992), participant opinion of preparation programs (Guyton, 1996; Mullen, 1997; Stallworth, 1994), and reasons for selecting or not selecting teaching (Gordon, 1997; King, 1993; Su, 1996).

Teacher Preparation and Multicultural Education

Many of the records generated from the search on "minority" teachers and "minority" teachers/ teacher preparation were duplicated in the 90 records on multicultural education and teachers of color. Consequently, the emphasis in this category was also on recruitment, special programs, testing, role models, and teacher perception. However, the descriptions of programs or case studies of schools and teachers more often centered on teacher work with children labeled "at risk," rather than on the procedural and structural elements of alternative teacher preparation programs (see Foody, 1990; Hu, 1994; Huber, 1991; Northwest Regional Lab, 1988; Rendon, 1994). A few studies addressed the problems students of color encounter in

predominantly White universities (Bowser, 1993) and some questioned the ability of predominantly White college faculty to teach multicultural education courses and/or students of color (Bainer, 1993; Gonzalez, 1991; Troutman, 1997).

## Discussion

As in other research on people of color, the disregard for empirical evidence to support assertions, the resurrection of the deficit paradigm, and the dilemma that our mere presence poses a problem to the dominating group is disturbing. Particularly unsettling is the lack of scholarship in the field of multicultural that addresses the needs and preparation of teachers of color. This omission in multicultural education may be attributed to the focus on preparing all teachers for diverse populations rather than on preparing teachers of color (King, Hollins, & Wayman, 1997; Melnick & Zeichner, 1997). The inclusive nature of the multiculturalism, the concentration on the theoretical scholarship, and the current White movement in multicultural education (Sheets, in press) may also contribute to this oversight.

This literature establishes a causal relationship between the increase of children of color and the shortage of teachers of color. As a result, children of color are positioned as demographic problems and people of color as the solution. Teachers of color are expected to undertake the burden of educating the growing student population of color, especially those who attend high-poverty urban schools. The conjecture that teachers of color, because of physical racial markers, advantage children of color, is fundamentally irrational. Teachers of color who teach in schools with a majority of children of color may not necessarily be better prepared than White teachers to succeed with children from their own or with children from other groups of color. This is an area where equity prevails — both teachers of color and White teachers are equally ill prepared.

While one can argue that teachers of color may possess valuable cultural and linguistic resources, it must also be recognized that these strengths need to be acknowledged, enhanced, and developed as pedagogical tools. In other words, "teachers of color need to be provided opportunities to transfer their prior knowledge of culture to pedagogy content knowledge"

(Hollins, personal conversation, March 6, 2000). I did not find any literature on programs or teacher preparation designs that addressed this pedagogical issue.

Societal and institutional factors, such as low pay, difficult working environments, and lack of respect for not choosing teaching as a career, are not unique to a particular group of individuals. These conditions prevail in U.S. public schools, especially those in urban settings, regardless of the race and ethnicity of school personnel. Furthermore, research shows that White teachers are also reluctant to teach in poor urban settings (Haberman, 1996). Teachers of color, who choose to teach in high-poverty settings, are usually committed to the struggle of educating our children and are aware of the working conditions, since many have attended such schools. Research also reveals that teachers of color who teach in urban areas remain there for longer periods of time (Riley, 1998; Clewell & Villegas, 1998).

While Villegas and Clewell (1998) maintain that teachers of color in public schools can serve as role models for all children, Irvine (1989) and Mitchell (1998) argue that teachers of color must go "beyond the role model" identification. By reason of shared cultural experiences and the possibility of forging personal bonds with children from the same racial or ethnic heritage, teachers of color potentially function in critical roles that benefit children. For example, they are more likely to serve as cultural translators, mentors, intercessors, mediators, home-school links, activists, and supporters of academic and social growth.

A recurring theme in the scholarship on special and alternative teacher preparation programs designed for teachers of color is the assumption that this population does not include the most "academically able" students of color. It is presumed that "able" students of color have other options and/or are not attracted to teachin. Institutions that provide preparation programs are advised to hold students in special programs accountable at the same level as White students in traditional programs. Bainer (1993, p. 21) adds that many of these students are academically unprepared, yet forced to compete with the "better educated, more affluent classmates." Hernandez and Descamps (1986) maintain that Mexican American students in higher education

become discouraged and drop out, often not realizing the relationship between hard work and good grades. University professors' ability to adapt instruction and curriculum to students' prior knowledge is rarely acknowledged and institutional acquiescence to testing, including the exorbitant fees, is ignored.

The information generated from research on teacher of color perception to particular courses and program requirements can be useful to help improve the overall design of teacher preparation programs. However, university faculty must realize that while teachers have opinions regarding the value of their credential program, they may not understand what they need. Teachers of color should not be used as cultural carriers or perceived as experts in instructional strategies or curricular content for diverse students, while at a novice stage.

## Conclusion

The literature I reviewed lacked discussion on how to systematically incorporate multicultural education in teacher preparation program designs. Although there is a substantial body of literature specifically for preparing multicultural White teachers, the scholarship in multicultural education generally does not address the preparation of teachers of color. The same questions persist. Can we prepare effective, powerful teachers of color in the same way that we prepare White teachers? Can we prepare teachers of color to go beyond the role model designation? The responses to these issues may require significant changes in the way we design and implement teacher preparation programs.

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